(ii) Government have prohibited the handling 112 dyes which are capable of releasing any of the harmful amines under usage through reductive cleavage process.

(iii) The Government has further set up 23 laboratories, in different parts of the country, with sophisticated instruments capable of testing textiles to assess their conformance as per the requirements.

**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED AND UNSTARRED QUESTIONS SET FOR THE 8TH AUGUST, 2002

Labour abuse

*361. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item "India rapped on labour abuse" published in the 'Times of India' dated the 20th June, 2002; and

(b) if so, Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The main points raised in the news-item which relate to a report by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) are (i) abuse of Core Labour Standards, (ii) widespread child labour, (iii) employment of child labour in export related sectors, (iv) absence of freedom to protest resulting in death of 17 workers and their family members in Tamil Nadu for demanding increase in poverty wages, and (v) ICFTU's request to WTO to work intensively with the Government of India. However, no such report has been received by the Government.

The position with reference to the above issues is as under:

India supported the adoption of the ILO Declaration on

** The sitting of the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, the 8th August, 2002 was adjourned due to interruptions in the House. Answers to questions put down in the lists for that day were laid on the Table of the House on Monday, the 12th August, 2002.

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998. Consequently, the principles enshrined in the Core Labour Standards of the ILO are being implemented for the benefit of workers through national laws and development programmes. The allegation that all core labour standards are being abused is not accepted, such instances as come to the notice of the concerned Governments are dealt with appropriately.

As regards ICFTU's suggestion that WTO should work intensively with the Government of India in relation to child labour, India's stand has been that the ILO is the only appropriate forum for addressing the issues relating to the international labour standards. This is also in consonance with the declaration of the WTO Ministerial Conference held in 1996 in Singapore and has been reiterated in subsequent Ministerial Conferences as well. India has consistently rejected any attempts at a linkage between trade and labour standards, as such a linkage is seen as a protectionist device meant to hinder the comparative advantage of low wage developing economies.

As far as widespread child labour is concerned, the number of children in India who are working as child labour is 11.28 million as per 1991 census. The National Policy on Child Labour in India provides for abolition of child labour through a sequential process beginning with the worst forms and thereafter moving to hazardous and less hazardous forms of child labour. The Policy envisages a multi-pronged strategy for addressing the problem. Under the area based component of the strategy a scheme of National Child Labour Projects (NCLPs) was formulated and is currently being implemented in 100 districts spread over 13 child labour endemic States in India. The Government had allocated around Rs. 250 crore for the last Five Year Plan for utilisation in these projects.

As far as the alleged excesses by the Police against workers in Tamil Nadu is concerned, the Government of Tamil Nadu has intimated that there has been no incident where workers were killed because they demanded increase in wages.